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ABSTRACT

A study examined career transitions within organizations. Developed and evaluated during the study was a model that views career transitions as a stress-coping process influenced by work and non-work factors. Data from organizational records, a questionnaire, and performance ratings were collected for 109 managers and professionals in a manufacturing firm and an osteopathic hospital concerning the relationship between career and personal transitions in their lives as well as the strategies they used to cope with any stress caused by these changes. Data supported the model in that individuals experiencing a large number of personal life transitions were more likely to adopt a symptom-coping strategy (as contrasted with a situation-focused strategy) for dealing with job stress during the transition. Data indicated that major career transitions were associated with major transitions in personal life and suggested that a career transition could act as a trigger event for personal life instability. Based on the study, it was proposed that organizations examine the feasibility of career transitions other than promotion as a career management tool and that organizations begin to bear more responsibility for stress management. An appendix of scale items used to measure coping and personal life transitions is included. (MN)

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**Career Transitions Within Organizations: Exploring
Connections Between Work, Nonwork and Coping Strategies¹**

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Career Transitions within Organizations: Exploring
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines career transitions within organizations. An integrative model was developed and evaluated which views career transitions as a stress-coping process influenced by work and nonwork factors. Data supported the model in that individuals experiencing a large number of personal life transitions were more likely to adopt a symptom-management coping strategy (as contrasted with a situation-focused strategy) for dealing with job stress during the transition. However, neither the magnitude of the career transition nor intervening role variables in the model contributed to explanation of the career transition process. Major career transitions were associated with major transitions in personal life and data suggested that a career transition could act as a "trigger" event for personal life instability. Implications of both supportive and disconfirming findings are discussed. Future directions are suggested for research on careers and for career management in organizations.

This paper weaves together two processes of current interest to organizational researchers: career transitions and stress. A career transition is often thought of as including a change of employers. However, career transitions also occur as an ongoing feature of organizational life when an employee changes jobs within the organization. The focus here is on intra-organizational career transitions. Such career transitions might be stress-inducing because they tax the individual's adaptive capacity and may create situations, temporary or chronic, which threaten to exceed the individual's capacity to respond (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Holmes & Rahe, 1967; McGrath, 1976).

From the standpoint of career research, there is a need for theory-based research on career development processes in organizations (Hall, 1976). Studies have been published on the factors associated with intra-organizational mobility (e.g., Anderson, Milkovich & Tsui, 1981; Bray, Campbell & Grant, 1974; Jennings, 1971; Rosenbaum, 1979) and on the impact of corporate-initiated geographic relocation (e.g., Pinder, 1977; Seidenberg, 1973). Theory-building in this area is emerging (Louis, 1980; Vardi, 1980) but as yet there has been little in the way of theory-guided research on the transition process itself and the coping strategies people use during the transition.

This paper presents an exploratory model of intra-organizational career transitions as a stress process. The model integrates and expands upon previous theory and research in several related areas. The purpose is to specify antecedents and consequences of coping during career transitions and examine how personal life transitions impact on career transitions. While findings that bear on these issues have been presented in piecemeal fashion, more comprehensive, integrative studies are lacking.

A Stress-Coping View of Career Transitions: The Literature

This research is interdisciplinary, drawing upon literature in social psychology, organizational psychology and psychosomatic medicine. The model is designed to explain a process which has traditionally been the concern of industrial psychologists, namely job changes within organizations. Studies in three areas have a direct bearing on this research: occupational stress, work and nonwork, and conceptualizations of coping processes.

Occupational Stress. Numerous studies have linked stress to social-psychological factors in the work environment (Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison & Pinneau, 1975; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964; Kasl, 1978; McGrath, 1976). Medical researchers have focused on the physiological and disease indicators such as hypertension and heart disease (Kagan & Levi, 1974) while organizational researchers have focused on psychological and behavioral indicators such as anxiety, boredom, withdrawal, job dissatisfaction, low job performance and turnover (Matteson & Ivancevich, 1979).

Studies which specifically examine career-related changes from a stress viewpoint are rare. Descriptive case studies (Jennings, 1967, 1971; Levinson, Darrow, Klein & McKee, 1978) document the stresses associated with career change and highlight the individualistic nature of coping behavior. While evidence is not uniformly supportive, some studies show a connection between job changes and coronary heart disease (Jenkins, Rosenman & Friedman, 1966; Syme, Hyman & Enterline, 1964; Theorell, 1978), voluntary dispensary visits (Kasl & French, 1962), and elevated stress hormones (Cobb, 1974). It has been specifically suggested that studies of career transitions distinguish between intra-company and inter-company moves and that magnitude of change be investigated (Kasl, 1978).

Work and Nonwork. The importance of placing career role research within the context of other life roles is frequently discussed (Bailyn & Schein, 1976; Van Maanen, 1977) but the close linkage between the work and nonwork domains has not been adequately explored conceptually or empirically at this point. Studying the work-nonwork linkage has become important in part because of a concern for the overall quality of life and calls for a re-examination of the balance and priorities across work and personal life (Evans & Bartolome, 1981).

The work of Rapoport and Rapoport (1975) suggests that where critical life-cycle role transitions occur simultaneously in both work and family spheres, the mutual interdependence of the two spheres is highlighted. They identified two patterns of relationships between work and nonwork, isomorphic (similarity) and heteromorphic (differences or complementarity). These two patterns are better known as the "spillover" and "compensatory" (Wilensky, 1960) hypotheses. The spillover hypothesis states that attitudes and activities at work will be positively related to attitudes and activities in the nonwork domain; dissatisfaction and alienation at work generalize to nonwork life and vice versa. The compensatory hypothesis posits a negative relationship between work and nonwork such that stultifying jobs are compensated for by pursuing challenge and satisfaction in leisure and vice versa.

Research in this area has tended to support the spillover hypothesis in that positive correlations are commonly observed in studies relating a variety of structural, attitudinal and behavioral variables across work and nonwork (Staines, 1980). For example, Rousseau (1978) found variety and challenge in work to be positively correlated with variety and challenge in nonwork. (See Orpen, 1978; Rousseau, 1978; Near, Rice & Hunt 1980; Staines, 1980 for reviews.)

Of late, however, the spillover and compensatory hypotheses have been criticized as oversimplified and non-mutually exclusive such that adequate tests are difficult to formulate (Kabanoff, 1980; Near, Rice & Hunt, 1980). It has been pointed out that the spillover hypothesis appears to hold for white collar and managerial samples where work tends to be central to the individual, whereas the compensatory hypothesis appears to have received more support with employees in jobs where working conditions are commonly assumed to be extraordinary (e.g., commercial fishing) or routine (e.g., auto assembly), i.e., among workers whose jobs may be less psychologically central.

Studies which correlate parallel dimensions (e.g., variety, challenge in work with variety, challenge in leisure) can offer limited insight into the dynamic issues of how the two domains become connected. Rather, these studies tell us only that the two domains influence each other, sometimes positively, sometimes negatively. As Near, Rice and Hunt (1980) point out, "... little has been done by way of specifying the psychological and social processes by which work can influence nonwork and vice versa" (Near, Rice & Hunt, 1980, p. 424). They suggest that studies are needed relating structural variables in one domain to attitudinal/behavioral variables in the other domain. Of late, Dreher (1982) has argued that considerable theoretical work exists to guide future research. However, the frameworks he reviews deal primarily with what the effects of extra-work variables might be on the work environment, not with the process through which the two are related. The present study looks at the process through which a structural variable in the nonwork domain (personal life transitions) influences psychological variables in the work domain (job stress). The process of interest is the coping process.

Literature from psychosomatic medicine has also explored the link between life transitions and stress. However, these studies typically confound the effects of work and nonwork transitions. Many studies have been based on the notion that regardless of the positive or negative evaluation of a life transition, when there is a "cluster of social events requiring change in the ongoing life adjustment" (Holmes & Rahe, 1967, p. 213), there is stress due to the psychosocial adjustment required. The empirical literature in this vein is extensive (see Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974; Gunderson & Rahe, 1974 for reviews) and studies have repeatedly documented the association between life changes and illness. One of the primary criticisms of this research, however, is the continued emphasis on direct linkages rather than on the investigation of the underlying mechanisms through which this life event-illness connection occurs. In particular, the effects of coping are thought to be important (Mechanic, 1975), but few studies are available which examine this intervening process.

Conceptualizations of Coping Processes. Theoretical models of stress, most notably Lazarus (1966, 1976), cast coping as one determinant of how stressful events will be experienced. Coping refers to efforts to master conditions of harm, threat or challenge (Monat & Lazarus, 1977). Coping strategies are viewed as an array of covert and overt behavior patterns by which an individual can actively prevent, alleviate or respond to stress-inducing circumstances (McGrath, 1976). Empirical tests of coping processes in work organizations are beginning to emerge (Anderson 1976, 1977; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978).

In the literature on coping with stress (e.g., Hall, 1972; Lazarus, 1966; Kahn et al., 1964; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978) three categories of coping can be identified, based on the target of the coping behavior (Latack, 1981):

1. Taking action on the stressor situation. Individuals can cope by attempting to alter the stressor situation directly, or by attempting to alter their relationship to the situation. For example, if an individual is experiencing stress induced by role ambiguity, s/he might meet with a supervisor to clarify what is expected on the job. If an individual is confronted with conflicting expectations from coworkers, s/he might cope by trying to meet all expectations appropriately, or by removing him/herself temporarily or permanently from the stressful situation.

2. Cognitive reappraisal of the situation. While the first strategy means altering the situation or one's relationship to it, this second coping strategy represents altering one's cognitions about the situation. Referred to as cognitive reappraisal (Lazarus, 1966), this strategy serves a coping function because the individual re-evaluates the situation so that it does not seem so stressful. For example, an individual facing role ambiguity may devalue the job vis-a-vis other life roles so that s/he worries less about what to do on the job.

3. Management of stress symptoms. Symptom-management consists of attempts to directly alter the stress symptoms. These are the most widely publicized coping techniques. Examples would be exercise, relaxation training, and the use or abuse of drugs and alcohol in order to relieve the affective and physiological stress symptoms.

Empirical evidence on coping with job-related stress is limited and few studies systematically investigate more than one of the three types of coping strategies defined above (Anderson, 1976, 1977; Burke & Belcourt, 1974; Hall, 1972; Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan & Mullan, 1981; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). From the studies which investigated the impact of coping on some type of stress symptom, conflicting results were obtained. Hall (1972) found the strongest

effect on satisfaction was for coping per se vs. having no conscious coping strategy at all. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) found that the only strategy that had any impact on stress related to work roles was a cognitive strategy (devaluing the job and thinking how much better one's job is now than a year ago) and the effects were small (1% of the variance). Burke and Belcourt (1974) found that among managers action coping strategies were viewed as most effective. The present research endeavors to expand our knowledge of the relative impact of coping related to one form of job stress, a career transition within the organization.

The Model and Hypotheses

The model presented in Figure 1 integrates theory and research on occupational stress, work and nonwork, and coping concepts. Literature summarized earlier provides the genealogy of the model and suggests that career transitions may be stressful because they require adjustment to change and involve the assumption of new roles which may tax adaptive capacities. Level of stress experienced, however, depends on coping strategies brought to bear in the situation. Finally, the linkage between work and nonwork implies that to understand career transitions, we should take into account concomitant personal life transitions or changes occurring outside of the work role.

Specifically, the model hypothesizes that the process through which a career transition may create stress depends first on the magnitude of the career transition.

Insert Figure 1 About Here

A change to a job very similar to the previous job should, other things equal, be less stressful than a change to a job which is radically different. This hypothesis

is drawn directly from the additivity theme prevalent in the stress literature (Selye, 1956; Levi, 1974; Schuler, 1980) as well in the life events literature (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). The additivity hypothesis states that changes of greater magnitude require more adjustment on the part of the individual. Hence, the more change, in both number and intensity, the more stress. Similarly, Louis (1980) in her theoretical work on career transitions has stated that the more elements that are different in the new role or situation, and the more each element is different from those in previous roles, the more the person making the transition has to cope with (p. 331). Therefore, it is hypothesized that the greater the magnitude of the career transition, the greater the stress.

However, it is clear that we must go beyond the direct link between change and stress and begin to study the intervening mechanisms through which change leads to stress. This model considers two intervening mechanisms--role variables and coping strategies.

The type of career transition studied here represents the taking on of a new organizational role (Graen, 1976; Katz & Kahn, 1978). The literature on organizational careers (Louis, 1980; Van Maanen, 1977) has also adopted a role change framework. Two role factors that have been repeatedly linked to stress in organizations are role ambiguity and role overload. These role variables have been associated with such stress symptoms as anxiety, tension, propensity to leave, low job performance and coronary heart disease risk factors (Kahn et al., 1964; Van Sell, Schuler & Brief, 1980). Therefore, a model which explores career transitions and stress might logically consider role variables as intervening processes. Specifically, the magnitude of the career transition causes job stress because it creates uncertainty as to how the job should be done (role ambiguity) and generates the perception that the job is beyond one's resources and

capabilities (role overload). If the new job differs from the previous job along numerous dimensions, we might expect ambiguity to be higher than it would be if only a few dimensions are different. Correspondingly, when an individual takes on a job that differs radically from the previous one, s/he might be more likely to feel unequal to the task than if s/he had assumed a role similar to the one from which s/he just came. Therefore, the greater the magnitude of the career transition, the higher the role ambiguity and role overload.

Following Lazarus (1966, 1976), coping strategies are the intervening processes which directly determine job stress and job performance in the new role. Recall that coping, as it is defined here, does not necessarily imply coping effectiveness; no normative assumptions are made concerning the impact coping should have on the outcome variables. Furthermore, there are no firm conclusions that can be drawn from previous studies regarding the differential impact of various coping strategies on job stress or job performance. Finally, the model is exploratory and is intended to examine rather than predict relative impact of different coping strategies. Hence, no directional hypotheses are offered a priori concerning the relationship between coping and the outcome variables. Simply stated, the model indicates that levels of stress and job performance should differ according to coping strategy employed.

Following the suggestion of Near, Rice and Hunt (1980) the model links a nonwork variable to the process by casting personal life transitions as a joint determinant of coping strategies, along with the preceding work variables in the model. This linkage is also drawn from the additivity notion discussed earlier. That is, if personal life changes coincide with work transitions, the individual faces more stress than s/he would if the work transition were the only change occurring. If it is correct to assume that stress is additive and coping resources

are finite, then the extent to which coping resources are being taxed in the personal life arena should have an effect on work-related coping strategies. The individual must cope with stressful situations in both work and personal life at the same time. Therefore, the model suggests that coping strategy will be influenced by the extent of concurrent personal life transitions.

In this model, job stress is hypothesized to be negatively related to performance. The "inverted U" hypothesis (Selye, 1956) argues that there are situations where an increase in stress is desirable because a moderate level of stress is motivating. The present study does not dispute that there may be some situations where a positive relationship between stress and performance could be observed. However, research on performance in learning situations (Spielberger, O'Neil & Hansen, 1972; Zajonc, 1965) suggests that during the transitional phase when an employee is learning a new organizational role, stress may inhibit job performance. Further, it may be difficult to locate a sample of managers for whom stress is too low, given the nature of professional roles in many organizations. Jennings (1965) has suggested that a great many managers function at moderate levels of anxiety most of the time. In effect, we may simply be unable to observe the left-hand side of the "inverted U"¹ in the population studied here. Therefore, the job stress-job performance relationship is thought to be negative.

In addition to the model built upon previous theoretical and empirical literature, the exploratory nature of this study suggests we search out other relationships that might help us further describe the career transition process. Specifically, the role of time as a variable (Katz 1978, 1980; Van Maanen & Katz, 1979) could be important since individuals in this sample are at different points in the transition process. For some individuals the job change is recent,

for others more time has elapsed. While there is virtually no empirical guidance as to how long a career transition lasts, it would seem important to examine effects of job tenure on stress and coping during a transitional time. Perhaps, as the transition proceeds one learns how to cope, and the change-induced stress is lower.

Further, it would be instructive to examine the extent to which personal life transitions coincide with job changes. Whereas the hypothesized model argues that the process through which personal life transitions connect with career transitions is the coping process, one could also ask if there is any coincidence between career transitions and personal life transitions. While the participants in this sample did not geographically relocate as part of the transition, one might expect, for example, that some changes in social or family arenas might coincide with the career transition. This is essentially a content rather than a process view of transitions. Do career and personal life transitions tend to cluster together, and if they do, can we describe the types of personal life transitions that are most closely linked with the magnitude of the career transition?

Method

Data were collected for 109 managers and professionals in a manufacturing firm ($n = 83$) and an osteopathic hospital ($n = 26$). The response rate across the two organizations was 81% (80% in the manufacturing firm and 84% in the hospital). No significant differences were found across the two organizations on the variables of interest in this research, though the groups were significantly different demographically (age, job and organizational tenure, sex). Employees who had changed jobs in their organizations within the preceding 15 months ($n = 78$) were included along with those who had not ($n = 31$). None of the job

changes required geographic relocation. Data sources were organizational records, a questionnaire completed by participants and performance ratings of supervisors.

Measures

Magnitude of Career Transition. Both objective and perceptual measures were developed for this variable. The objective measure operationalized Hall's (1979) classification scheme presented in Table 1. Hall has conceptualized

Insert Table 1 About Here

magnitude of career transition as the number of dimensions which can change and the intensity of change involved, with a job change viewed as least intense and a change of occupational field being most intense. The four dimensions related to intra-organizational career transitions are circled. (Compounding factors are included in the personal life transitions variable which will be described later.) The resulting 12 point objective scale for measuring magnitude of career transition is presented in Table 2. In the absence of empirical evidence as to how these dimensions should be weighted, a unit weighting scheme which

Insert Table 2 About Here

retains Hall's intensity ordering was employed. Using data from organizational records, the reliability of this scoring procedure was assessed by comparing interjudge agreement between the author and a personnel staff member. Rate of agreement was 91%. A perceptual measure was developed to assess how the individual perceives the transition. The items assessed how the change felt to the person experiencing it (e.g., "When I moved to this job, it felt like a big change"). Scale reliabilities for all measures are presented in parentheses on the diagonal in Table 5.

Coping strategies. Three a priori scales were developed to tap the three coping dimensions discussed earlier: action, cognitive reappraisal and symptom-management. Items were written by the author based on the coping literature, interviews with professionals who had made recent job changes in their organizations and from discussions with professionals interested in stress. The original pool of items for the action scale consisted of 23 items (e.g., "Get together with my supervisor to discuss this"). The cognitive reappraisal scale consisted of 13 items (e.g., "Remind myself that work isn't everything"). The symptom-management scale was composed of 27 items (e.g., "Get extra sleep or nap"; "Do physical exercise"). Four counselors at a local community college acted as judges for item clarity after being provided with the three conceptual definitions presented on pp. 5-6. They were asked to sort the statements into one of the three categories. The decision rule was that any item not unanimously classified into the appropriate category would be dropped. Therefore, four items were dropped from the action scale, two from the cognitive reappraisal scale and three from the symptom-management scale. The resulting scales appear in Appendix A.

Role ambiguity and role overload. Six items from Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) were used to measure role ambiguity. Two items from the Rizzo et al. (1970) scale for role conflict measure role overload as it is defined here. These two items were combined with items from Beehr, Walsh and Taber (1976) to complete an eight-item scale to measure role overload.

Personal Life Transitions. A scale from Rahe (1975) based on the Holmes and Rahe Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) was used to measure personal life transitions the individual experienced in the last year. In the original scale both work and nonwork items were included. The work-related

items were dropped so that the remaining items tapped only events related to personal life (death of a spouse, birth of a baby, etc.). Normative weights developed by Holmes and Rahe were used. The items in the personal life transitions scale appears in Appendix A.

Job-related stress. Items used were drawn from previously-used state anxiety scales, with instructions reworded to focus on the job situation (Caplan et al., 1975; Berkun, Bialek, Kern & Yagi, 1962). A state anxiety scale measures anxiety relative to a particular situation as contrasted with a trait anxiety scale which measures anxiety as a personality trait.

Job Performance. To assess job performance each participant's supervisor was asked to complete the Minnesota Satisfactoriness Scale (MSS) (Carlson, Dawis, England & Lofquist, 1963).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using correlational analysis and path analysis based on full information maximum-likelihood evaluation of structural equations (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1978). The purpose of path analysis is to test the causal ordering of the variables in the model. It cannot enable one to deduce causality but it can identify those models that resist elimination. In essence, it gives us faith that the correlations observed hold when effects of preceding variables in the model are taken into account (Schmitt, Note 1). The computer program used was LISREL IV (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1978). This approach relies on the logic of confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate measures of the underlying constructs and applies a full information maximum likelihood analysis to the hypothesized causal relationships specified a priori.

Results

Types of Career Transitions

The intent of this study was to examine the full range of intra-organizational career transitions. It should be noted, however, that in this sample nearly all career transitions involved upward promotion. Table 3 shows that over 90% of the career transitions were upward promotions. Strictly lateral moves not

Insert Table 3 About Here

involving a move to a higher level are rare, occurring in only 6% of the cases, and downward moves are virtually nonexistent (1%). All transitions were organizationally-initiated. Furthermore, those individuals being moved were younger employees with less than 10 years of organizational tenure. This can be seen in the t-test comparisons presented in Table 4, which shows the career transition

Insert Table 4 About Here

group to be significantly younger, better educated and having less organizational tenure than the no-transition group.

Intercorrelations Among Variables

Preliminary to the path analysis, the intercorrelations among variables were examined and are presented in Table 5 with scale reliability estimates on

Insert Table 5 About Here

the diagonal. With the exception of the diagonal for the objective magnitude of career transition scale which gives rate of interjudge agreement, the diagonals are internal consistency estimates.

The objective and perceptual measures for magnitude of career transition correlated .66 ($p < .001$) which indicates convergent validity for Hall's (1979)

classification scheme. The objective magnitude of career transition measure correlated significantly with job-related stress ($r = .16, p < .05$). Both measures correlate with personal life transitions; $r = .26, (p < .01)$ for the objective measure and $r = .31 (p < .001)$ for the perceptual measure. This indicates that individuals undergoing more major career transitions are also experiencing more in the way of personal life changes. Since these correlations are based on three essentially independent methods of data collection, it is unlikely that these correlations are inflated by method variance. The perceptual measure asked for a self-evaluation of the degree of change in career role, the objective measure was based on Hall's (1979) structural classification scheme presented in Table 1, and the personal life transitions measure appeared in a different section of the questionnaire with separate response scale and asked for a simple recall of whether or not certain events occurred in the last year.

Personal life transitions correlate with symptom-focused coping ($r = .33, p < .001$). This indicates employees facing a large number of transitions in personal life are more likely to use coping strategies that divert attention from the job rather than focusing coping strategies on the job. Consistent with previous research, role ambiguity and role overload correlate positively with job related stress. The correlation for role ambiguity with job stress was $.38 (p < .001)$ and for role overload the correlation was $.20 (p < .01)$.

There is a significant correlation between both MCT measures and role overload but in the negative, not positive direction. The $r = -.26 (p < .001)$ for the objective measure and $r = -.27 (p < .01)$ for the perceptual measure. Rather than feeling more overloaded by a major career transition, these employees are less prone to such perceptions than their colleagues who make minor transitions or no transition at all.

Several relationships that were expected based on the hypothesized model did not appear. The correlation between MCT and role ambiguity is nonsignificant. Finally, there was no correlation between job-related stress and job performance. This result could be explained if the relationship did deviate from linear, but an examination of a scatterplot for these two variables did not suggest an inverted "U" (Selye, 1956). The distribution of the job-related stress scale suggested that restriction of range was not the problem, since the mean was 47.8 out of a possible 100, with a standard deviation of 10.1.

Next we examine the effects of time since the job change on stress and coping. The correlation between job tenure and stress was .06 (n.s.). The correlations of job tenure with action coping (.10), with cognitive reappraisal (.08) and with symptom-focused coping (.13), are all nonsignificant as well. Therefore these data do not show a connection between point of time during the transition and coping or reported stress level.

Finally, we turn to an examination of personal life transitions in light of career transitions. As previously noted, these data show that more major career transitions go along with more personal life transitions. Now, we look at what types of personal life transitions are most closely linked to the magnitude of the career transition. For this analysis, the personal life items from the Holmes and Rahe scale (Holmes & Rahe, 1967) were broken into subscales as suggested by Rahe (1975). The subscales are home and family, health, personal and social, and financial (see Appendix A). Magnitude of career transition was then correlated with these subscales (home and family, $r = .16$, [$p < .05$]; health, $r = .25$, [$p < .01$]; personal and social, $r = .21$, [$p < .05$]; financial, $r = .16$ [$p < .05$]). While all of the correlations are significant, they are not significantly different from each other. The magnitude of career transition is most strongly connected

to changes in health habits, and secondarily to changes in personal and social aspects of nonwork life.

Path Analysis

Several initial LISREL runs were necessary before an interpretable result was achieved due to measurement problems for the coping variables. A satisfactory measurement model is a prerequisite for meaningful interpretation of the structural model. The intercorrelation among the action and cognitive reappraisal scales was sufficiently high that they could not be treated as separate theoretical constructs. Therefore, they were treated as two indicants of the same underlying construct, labeled situational coping, i.e., coping which consists of actions or thoughts related to the job situation.

The resulting model is presented in LISREL format in Figure 2. There are two exogeneous (independent) variables: magnitude of career transition and

Insert Figure 2 About Here

personal life transitions. The remaining six variables are considered to be caused by those two variables and are labeled endogenous (dependent) variables. For example, job stress is viewed as directly dependent on the two coping variables (situational and symptom-management) and as indirectly caused by the other variables in the model.

The circles represent the underlying theoretical constructs and the rectangles represent the observed measures of each theoretical construct. Two of the theoretical constructs have multiple observed measures. The two indicants of magnitude of career transition are the objective measure (OBJ MCT) and the perceptual measure (PER MCT). The two indicants of situational coping are action (ACT) and cognitive reappraisal (COG REAP).

Two additional variables were also included to control for effects of boundary spanning (Leifer & Huber, 1977) on role ambiguity and role overload and to control for social desirability effects (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964) on self-reported anxiety and coping strategies. The path coefficients above were obtained with the inclusion of the control variables but the control variables were omitted here to simplify the visual presentation of results.

Since the residuals for the measurement model were fixed based on scale reliabilities, estimates relating the measures to the constructs are analogous to true variance for that variable. Results of the structural evaluation of the model are shown in the standardized path coefficients relating to the theoretical variables. Standardized path coefficients are simpler to interpret than unstandardized coefficients and are appropriate for cross-sectional data where the model is tested within a single population (Maruyama & McGarvey, 1980).

Some support for the hypothesized model was obtained based on the significant path from personal life transitions to symptom-management. There is also some support for the linkages between role ambiguity and role overload with symptom-management. However, interpretation of these coefficients is speculative because the role ambiguity-symptom-management parameter is reversed in sign from the zero order correlation and hence fits the statistical definition of a suppressor effect. Apparently, there is an effect for role variables on symptom-focused coping but the intercorrelation between role ambiguity and role overload makes it difficult to unravel the separate effects.

The remaining path coefficients do not support the other causal linkages of the hypothesized model. If a career transition is a stress process it may operate via mechanisms other than the role variables and coping strategies examined here. In the lower portion of Figure 2, estimates of intercorrelations among

residuals for the independent and dependent variables are presented. The residual variance for each of the dependent variables is found on the diagonal. The size of the residual variances indicates that the model leaves substantial variance unexplained. If we subtract these variances from 1, we obtain the variance explained by the model, which is conceptually analogous to R^2 in regression analysis. We can see that for role ambiguity (.17), situational coping (.06), and job performance (.01), the variance explained is small. This suggests important explanatory variables have been omitted from the model.

For role overload, the explained variance is .28, indicating that the magnitude of the career transition does have an effect on overload experienced in the new job. For symptom-management, the variance explained is .90, reflecting the strong link between amount of personal life transitions and the extent to which an individual adopts symptom-management strategies related to work. For job stress, the figure is .37, largely accounted for by the preceding role variables in the model.

The LISREL program also computes a reproduced correlation matrix based on the parameter estimates and applies a χ^2 test of significance to the difference between the reproduced and observed matrix. This enables one to evaluate overall fit of the model to the data. The χ^2 test with 42 degrees of freedom is 68.72 ($p < .01$). However, for a sample size in excess of 100, the χ^2/df ratio is preferred (Schmitt, 1980). The χ^2/df ratio is 1.6 for this model. As Bentler and Bonett (1980) have pointed out, the chi-square goodness-of-fit test is insufficient for evaluating structural models because applying this criteria for larger samples leads to rejection of virtually any model as inadequate. Conversely, in smaller samples, various competing models will be equally acceptable. While there is no set criterion for the χ^2/df ratio, a ratio of less than 10 is considered satisfactory. Thus, in general terms the model is a reasonable fit to the data.

Discussion

The data here reveal that there is substantial overlap between the magnitude of career transition as objectively classified, and the individual's perception of the magnitude of the change. It appears as if the Hall (1979) scheme does provide a means of mapping career transitions with some confidence that the objective map has perceptual reality for individual making the transition.

Concerning the theoretical model, the data presented here support some of the hypothesized linkages in the model. Strong support was found for the impact of personal life transitions on the career transition process. Individuals experiencing a large number of transitions in their personal lives were more likely to employ symptom-management strategy for dealing with job stress during the career transition. Kahn et al., (1964) have suggested that as stress increases, individuals abandon problem-solving coping strategies and turn to emotion-focused coping that attempts to alleviate the stress symptoms rather than resolve the stressful situation (Kahn et al., 1964). The data here support this notion. Anderson (1976) also found support for this idea in a study of managers coping with a business emergency. Thus, it appears that if we consider transition events at work along with transition events in personal life, we see support for the additive effects of presumably stressful events on coping strategies. That is, when individuals make major transitions simultaneously in work and personal life, they use coping strategies focused on symptoms rather than problem-solving coping strategies to deal with job stress during the transition process.

We also observe a strong connection between the magnitude of the career transition and personal life transitions. The more major the career transition,

the more personal life transitions the individual is facing. It may be that personal life instability provides a driving mechanism that causes employees to devote more time and energy to work, leading to organizationally-initiated career transitions. We are familiar with individuals who escape a turbulent personal life by becoming workaholics, many of whom are rewarded with promotions. However, a recent study by Vicino and Bass (1978) is not supportive of this interpretation. They found that managers who performed at a higher than predicted level (based on earlier managerial assessment scores) had experienced less, not more personal life instability. Personal life instability was measured using a scale very similar to the PLT measure employed in this study.

Conversely, major changes in the job could precipitate a reevaluation or rearrangement in personal life (divorce, behavior changes in family members). Over time the relationship is probably reciprocal and given the cross-sectional nature of the data here, we can only speculate on causal direction. However, given that the time frame of this study considered personal and career transitions occurring in the same time period, a more supportable interpretation may be that the major career transition precipitates personal life instability rather than vice versa. The reason is that if personal life upheaval were driving the individual to work harder and devote more time and energy to the job, which in turn resulted in an organizationally initiated promotion, it is reasonable to assume that this process takes time to work. It would seem that the impact showed take longer than a year to emerge, especially given the further constraint of availability of job opening into which the individual could move.

On the other hand, the job change could act as a "trigger event" for personal life changes which follow in relatively close proximity time-wise. The person who is most at risk for substantial personal life change within the year is

the person making a major career transition. While the tendency was not pronounced, an examination of clusters of personal life transitions showed that major career transitions tend to be more strongly linked to changes in health, personal habits and social activities than to changes in home and family or financial state.

Consistent with other studies, role ambiguity and role overload were strongly associated with job stress. This replication of previous studies is important because the measure of job stress used here avoids the problem of domain overlap prevalent in many studies of role theory and stress. These studies have correlated role ambiguity or role overload with "tension" and "stress" indices which ask the respondent how much s/he is "bothered by" role ambiguity and overload (Kasl, 1978). As previously indicated, the job stress scale used here was a state anxiety scale which asks the extent to which the employee feels tense or anxious in connection with the job.

If the observed effects between role ambiguity and coping hold true, they suggest that when confronted with uncertainty at work, people do engage in tension-relieving activities such as jogging and meditation. For overload, however, this situation may not generate this type of coping strategy. This is not surprising since individuals overloaded at work may work longer hours and therefore allow themselves little time for jogging, meditation or other diversions.

Turning to disconfirming findings, the overall process of career transitions as a stress-coping process did not receive strong support. Basic to the model is the popular notion drawn from the stress literature that change-induced stress is additive; the more change, the more stress. In these data, magnitude of career transition is not highly correlated with job stress.

Since we are attempting to predict a complex phenomenon, i.e., job stress, we might not expect to find strong relationships for a particular variable. However, there is conceptual explanation if we make a distinction between positive and negative change events. Some studies have suggested that the level of stress induced by a particular change event varies according to how the event is interpreted by the individual experiencing it. Events which are interpreted as desirable by the individual are less stressful than those interpreted undesirable (McFarlane, Norman, Steiner, Ranjan & Scott, 1980; Vinokur & Selzer, 1973). Similarly, Kobasa (1979) found that "hardiness" moderated the amount of stress experienced. One dimension of hardiness is the tendency to see change events as opportunities rather than inconveniences. If it is true that a desirable change is not as stressful as an undesirable change, then this may explain the lack of relationship between magnitude of career transition and job stress. In this data set, all of the career transitions that occurred involved upward movement. In most organizations, upward movement or promotion is likely to be viewed as a desirable event. Therefore, magnitude of the career transition may not be connected with job stress in this sample because virtually all of the career transitions involved promotion.

Alternatively, Driver's (1979) career concepts model could be applied to yield another interpretation based on individual differences in preferred career pattern. Driver's model posits that individuals vary in the decision style that they apply to their careers. The result is that individuals differ greatly in the amount and type of career-related change they prefer. If the participants in this study varied in their career orientation, it is possible that the resulting variation in reaction to promotion (some positive, some negative) mutually canceled in this analysis.

Evaluation of the hypothesized model suggests that the role variables and coping strategies do not contribute much to the explanation of the career transitions process. Magnitude of career transition had no connection with on role ambiguity. Further, employees making major career transitions have less, not more role overload than their colleagues making minor career transitions or no career transition. Studies of intra-organizational mobility have not looked at job changes as related to role overload. However, these unexpected results might be explained in terms of lack of a standard for determining appropriate workload and/or lower expectations as to how much work should be accomplished. When an employee assumes a new organizational role, particularly one that is a radical departure from the previous role, s/he may simply lack a standard against which appropriate workload can be evaluated. It is difficult to feel like one is not doing enough work when one is still in the process of determining exactly how much is to be done. Even if the workload is clear cut, an employee may not expect him/herself to be equal to all of the tasks, given the newness of the job. Correspondingly, role senders (Katz & Kahn, 1978) may make a particular effort not to expect too much of a person during the transition phase. In sum, individuals in career transition may not only be in a state of "blissful ignorance" about how much work there is to do, but may also be the beneficiaries of lower workload expectations, both self-sent and from others in the role set. Hence, they experience less role overload than those making minor transitions or those who have been in their job a relatively long time (i.e., no change) who carry the full weight of both self-sent and organizational expectations as to how much work they should accomplish.

There is an alternative explanation for why those making major career transitions may experience less overload, and that explanation is related to the

fact that nearly all the career transitions were promotions. It may be that employees who are advanced to very different roles are the ones most capable of handling the workload. Indeed, it is possible that the more major the transition, the more likely that the employee is a "fast track" employee being groomed for top management. Hence, those individuals may report less role overload based on superior capability. An underlying theme in many studies of managerial success is ability to withstand workload pressures of organizational life (Bray, Campbell & Grant, 1974; Jennings, 1971).

No relationship between coping strategies and job stress was observed, nor did coping strategies differentiate good performers from poor performers. This finding is consistent with Pearlin and Schooler's conclusion that coping strategies have the least impact in the work role as compared with coping in other life roles (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). The length of time elapsed since the job change did not affect job stress or coping. It may be that as change-induced stress subsides overtime, other stresses take over. Furthermore, the hypothesis that job stress would be negatively related to job performance was not supported, nor did there appear to be a curvilinear relationship between stress and job performance.

Implications for Future Research on Career Transitions in Organizations

These results have several important implications for research on career transitions in organizations. First, this study provides strong evidence that research on career roles should be placed within the larger context of other life roles. Our understanding of the factors that influence the career transition process would have been substantially reduced if the impact of concomitant personal life transitions had not been included. Future studies should continue to explore the impact of structural variables in nonwork, such as personal life transitions, on attitudes and behavior in career roles.

Second, given the strong theme of change as stress, the lack of connection between magnitude of career transition and either stress or coping is somewhat surprising. Based on other studies, post-hoc interpretations were offered which suggest that the desirability of the change is a factor. It may be that out of all the possible types of transitions in the Hall scheme (1979) only particular types of "desirable" transitions are noticeably stressful (e.g., from operative to supervision; middle to upper management). Anecdotal evidence gathered prior to the start of this research confirms this notion. For example, one engineer had made numerous intra-organizational career transitions as part of his fast track career path. In recounting his transition experiences, he described his move from a position as product engineer to head of the group of product engineers who were his former coworkers. He commented, "Now that was when I could have really used some help!"

The desirable-undesirable distinction would also suggest that future research on career transition stress concentrate on those career transitions likely to be viewed negatively. In most organizations, the value placed on upward mobility is so strong that lateral moves not clearly tied to future promotions are viewed with suspicion, and downward moves are assumed to be the "kiss of death." Involuntary changes and reassignments could be viewed as undesirable and stressful and therefore worthy of study (Freedman, Stumpf, Weitz & Platten, 1981). Given a slow growth economy, and the increasing frequency of corporate cutbacks and mergers, career transitions which have an involuntary, undesirable component will be a critical research domain in the next decade. Future research on career transitions could also incorporate a variety of individual difference factors that might relate to perceptions of desirability vs. undesirability. Examples would be Kobasa's (1979) notion of "hardiness" or Driver's (1979) career concepts model.

From the standpoint of research strategy, two suggestions can be offered. First, career transitions as a process, rather than an event, are relatively unexplored. While integrative interdisciplinary research is a worthwhile endeavor, it may be premature to base model-building of career transitions on pre-existing theory (e.g., role theory). Future studies might adopt a more exploratory, hypothesis-generating approach aimed at describing and classifying how individuals react to this process, and what individual and organizational factors contribute to and alleviate stress during the transition. Methodologies such as interviews, observation and participant journals could provide revealing data on the transition experience.

A second research strategy concerns time as a variable. There are shortcomings in using cross-sectional data to explore a process occurring over time. If we adopt a more exploratory approach, we can follow people through the transition process. As people move through the transition process, stress and coping processes may emerge that are not evident when we compare people who are at different points during the transition process.

A third methodological issue concerns whether the appropriate level of analysis is normative or ipsative. Stress is conceptualized as a highly individualistic process, involving a deviation from some "normal" level of functioning (Beehr & Newman, 1978). Individuals vary widely in the level of stress they experience in a particular situation and in the coping strategies they use. Thus, when we compare data across individuals who may be at different levels of "normal" to begin with, we may mask critical processes that occur intra-individually. For example, a given individual making a career transition may indeed experience an increase in stress associated with his process. However, this might never be revealed if we compare that individual with others. The

appropriate comparison is that individual with him/herself at some other point in time when s/he felt "normal" insofar as stress level is concerned. If we adopt an intra-individual level of analysis, we may indeed see that the career transition process is stressful. Studying individuals longitudinally, we can collect multiple data points on the same individual over time, and examine more appropriately the individual processes and reactions involved.

Implications for Career Management in Organizations

The results of this study suggest a variety of insights for management of career development in organizations. First, the data suggest that organizations should be aware of the potential connection between career transitions and personal life transitions--i.e., that for whatever reason, people undergoing career transitions may also experience personal life instability in the same time period. In short, a career transition may not be the only change an employee is being required to make, and the amount of personal life change increases with the amount of change in career role. It was speculated that the career transition may be a "trigger event" for personal life instability. If this is true, then concern for the employee's nonwork life should accompany major career moves within the organization. This concern could take the form of seminars of counseling which help the employee examine potential impacts of work changes on personal life, and which help him/her develop strategies for managing the change. Some career development seminars in organizations involve spouses, and this would certainly be appropriate here.

Second, these results raise a question about what kind of career development opportunities are available to employees through job moves. If the organizations in this study are typical, career development based on job changes is limited to upward movement. However, there are a number of economic,

social and legal pressures which indicate that career transitions other than promotion will become increasingly important as a career management tool in the next decade.

There has been much discussion recently of the growing scarcity of promotional moves due to a slower rate of economic growth together with the fact that the baby boom has now entered middle management (Wall Street Journal, 1981). In addition, growing numbers of employees are entering organizations with MBA degrees. These individuals, together with the baby boom managers, have high expectations for career development. Simultaneously, however, the retirement age has been raised to age 70 and there is speculation that it may be abolished entirely. Added to this are affirmative action programs which seek to speed the progress of women and minorities up through the ranks. Traditionally, employee expectations for career development have emphasized upward promotion. Indeed, career development has often been synonymous with upward movement (Battalia, 1973). Since it appears, however, that expectations for continued growth and challenge for these employees may not be met through upward promotion alone, organizations will have to consider employee career transitions of all kinds, not just upward promotion, as a means of providing career growth while also meeting legal responsibilities in the areas of affirmative action and age discrimination.

Finally, these results suggest that the organization bears some responsibility for stress management. Given that individual coping strategies did not have an impact on job stress, the organization might explore initiatives such as structural, policy or procedural changes to alleviate such stress factors such as ambiguity or overload. An alternative would be management development seminars focused on stress management. However, the content of such programs

should be carefully selected. The typical stress management seminar emphasizes the symptom-focused coping strategies (biofeedback, meditation) which were not shown in this study to reduce job stress.

Footnotes

1. Appreciation is expressed to John Wanous for his insights on this issue.

References Notes

1. Schmitt, N. Personal conversation, East Lansing, MI: August, 1980.

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Table 1

Magnitude of Career Transition^a

	Job	Organization	Institution Type	Level	Function/ Occupation	Occupational Field
High	X	X	X	X	X	X
	X	X	X		X	X
	X	X			X	X
	X			X	X	X
	X				X	X
	X	X	X	X	X	
	X	X	X		X	
	X			X	X	
	X	X			X	
	X				X	
	X	X	X	X		
	X	X		X		
	X			X		
	X	X	X			
	X	X				
	X					

Low

X = Change in that dimension

^aHall (1979)Compounding Factors

Family Change

Life Stage Change

Spouse Career Change

Geographical Change

Other Major Life Change

Table 2

Objective Magnitude of Career Transition Scale

Change in:	Scale Value
Job + Level + Occupation + Function + Occupational Field	12
Job + Occupation + Function + Occupational Field	11
Job + Level + Occupation + Occupational Field	10
Job + Level + Occupation + Function	9
Job + Occupation + Occupational Field	8
Job + Occupation + Function	7
Job + Level + Occupation	6
Job + Level + Function	5
Job + Occupation	4
Job + Function	3
Job + Level	2
Job	1
No Change	0

Table 3

Types of Career Transitions

(n = 78)^a

	#	% ^b
Promotion	51	65%
Promotion and Lateral	21	27%
Lateral (New Function)	5	6%
Downward	1	1%
Downward and Lateral	--	--

^a78 of the 109 participants were making a career transition.

^bTotal ≠ 100% due to rounding.

Table 4

T-Test Comparisons of Career Transition/No Transition Groups

Variable	Career Transition (n = 78)		No Career Transition (n = 31)		T-Value
	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	
Age	37	9.9	44	10.8	-3.76***
Education (years beyond high school)	4.4	1.7	3.3	1.6	3.29***
Organizational Tenure (years)	9.5	8	13.8	10	-2.40*

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

Table 5
Intercorrelations Among Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Magnitude-Career Transition (Objective)	(.91) ^a											
2. Magnitude-Career Transition (Perceptual)	.66***	(.63)										
3. Role Ambiguity	.03	-.04	(.72)									
4. Role Overload	-.26**	-.27**	.41**	(.80)								
5. Action	.09	-.01	-.03	.04	(.77)							
6. Cognitive Reappraisal	.08	-.03	-.09	.04	.43***	(.84)						
7. Symptom-Management	-.02	-.04	-.08	-.05	.10	.21**	(.70)					
8. Personal Life Transitions	.26**	.31**	-.94	-.12	-.16*	-.13	.33***	(.72)				
9. Job-Related Stress	.16*	-.11	.38***	.20**	-.12	-.15	.01	.13	(.88)			
10. Job Performance	.03	-.08	-.13	-.01	.06	.03	.00	-.02	-.03	(.87)		
11. Social Desirability	.00	-.08	-.14	-.08	-.05	-.05	-.24**	-.16	-.10	-.05	(.70)	
12. Boundary Spanning	-.08	.03	-.04	.20*	.22**	.22**	.21*	.02	-.02	.08	-.22**	(.68)

^aInterjudge agreement

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

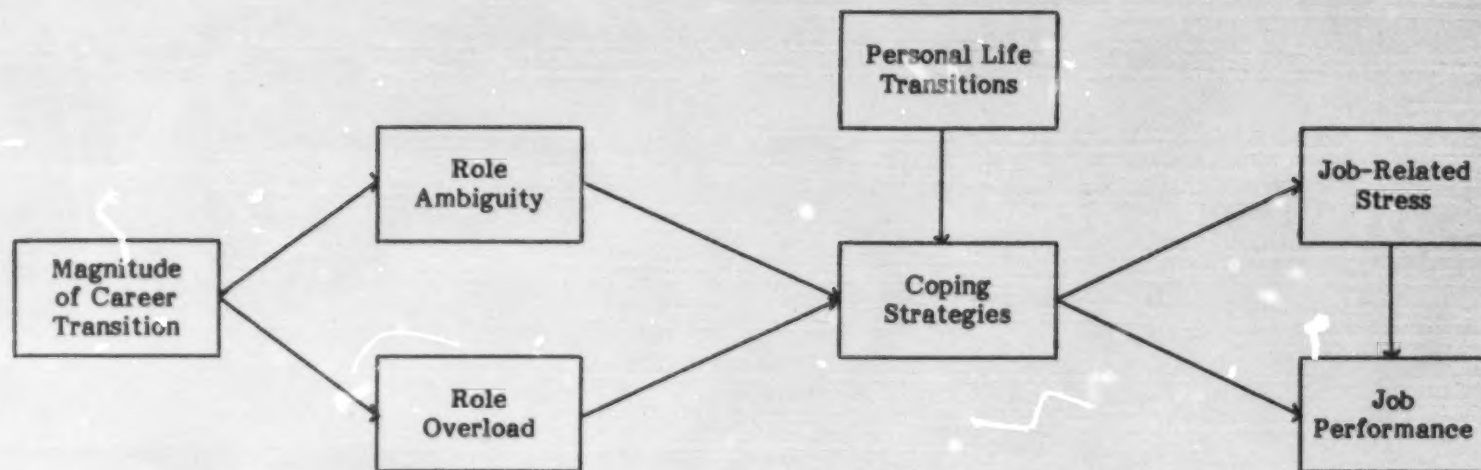
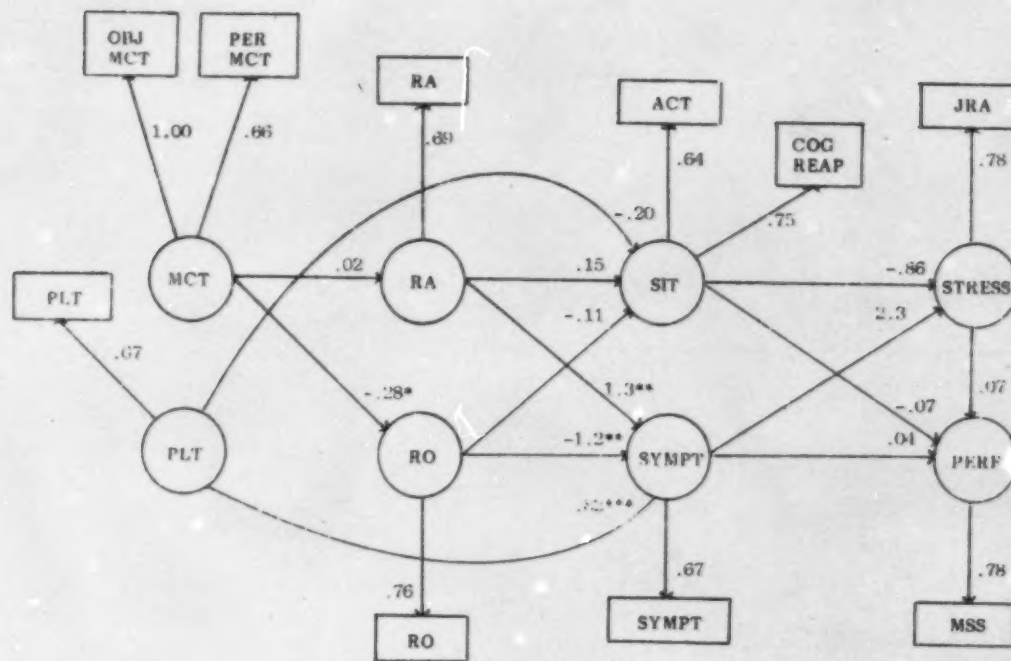


Figure 1. A model of career transitions as a stress-coping process.



Intercorrelations Among Residuals

	Independent Variables					Dependent Variables					
	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	5	6
Magnitude of Career Transition	1.0				Role Ambiguity	.83					
Personal Life Transitions	.35	1.0			Role Overload	.82	.72				
Social Desirability	-.02	-.79	1.0		Situational Coping	.00	.00	.94			
Boundary Spanning	-.13	-.14	-.14	1.0	Symptom-Management	.00	.00	.44	.10		
					Job Stress	.00	.00	.00	.00	.63	
					Job Performance	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.99

Figure 2: Standardized parameter estimates for hypothesized model of career transitions, coping and stress

MCT = magnitude of career transition; PLT = personal life transitions; RA = role ambiguity; RO = role overload; SIT = situational coping; SYMPT = symptom-management; ACT = action; COG REAP = cognitive reappraisal; STRESS = job-related stress; PERF = job performance; OBJ MCT = objective measure for magnitude of career transition; PER MCT = perceptual measure of magnitude of career transition; JRA = job-related anxiety; MSS = Minnesota Satisfactoriness Scale.

*p < .05

**p < .01

***p < .001

Appendix A

**Scale Items used to Measure Coping
and Personal Life Transitions**

Personal Life Transition Items^a

<u>Item</u>	<u>Weight</u>
<u>Home and Family</u>	
Death of spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Death of a close family member	63
Marriage	50
Marital reconciliation	45
Major change in health or behavior of a family member	33
Becoming pregnant or wife becoming pregnant	40
Addition of a new family member (adoption or birth of a child, relative moving in)	39
Major change in arguments with spouse	35
Child leaving home	29
In-law problems	29
Spouse beginning or ceasing work outside the home	26
Major change in living conditions (home improvements or a decline in home or neighborhood)	25
Change in residence	20
Major change in family get-togethers	15
<u>Health</u>	
Major illness or injury	53
Major change in sleeping habits	16
Major change in eating habits	15
<u>Personal and Social</u>	
Legal troubles resulting in your being in jail	63
Sexual difficulties	39
Death of a close friend	37
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Beginning or ceasing school or college	26
Major change in personal habits (dress, friends, life style)	24
Changing to a new school or college	20
Major change in type or amount of recreation	19
Major change in social activities	18
Vacation	13
Minor violations of the law	11
<u>Financial</u>	
Major change in financial state (i.e., increased or decreased income)	38
Major purchase, mortgage or loan	31
Foreclosure on mortgage	30

^aRahe, 1975

Coping Scales

Action ($\bar{X} = 108.6$; $S.D. = 10.5$)a

1. Get together with my supervisor to discuss this.
2. Avoid being in this situation if I can.
3. Try to be very organized so that I can keep on top of things.
4. Talk with people (other than my supervisor who are involved).
5. Try to keep away from this type of situation.
6. Put extra attention on planning and scheduling.
7. Delegate work to others.
8. Separate myself as much as possible from the people who created this situation.
9. Devote more time and energy to doing my job.
10. Try to get additional people involved in the situation.
11. Do my best to get out of the situation gracefully.
12. Try to work faster and more efficiently.
13. Decide what I think should be done and explain this.
14. Set my own priorities based on what I like to do.
15. Give it my best effort to do what I think is expected of me.
16. Request help from people who have the power to do something for me.

17. Seek advice from people outside the situation who may not have power but who can help me think of ways to do what is expected of me.
18. Work on changing policies which caused this situation.
19. Throw myself into my work and work harder, longer hours.

Cognitive Reappraisal ($\bar{X} = 65.3$; $S.D. = 10.5$)a

1. Tell myself that time takes care of situations like this.
2. Remind myself that other people have been in this situation and that I can probably do as well as they did.
3. Think of ways to use this situation to show what I can do.
4. Remind myself that work isn't everything.
5. Anticipate the negative consequences so that I'm prepared for the worst.
6. Try to see this situation as an opportunity to learn and to the people who are affected.
7. Try not to get concerned about it.
8. Try to think of myself as a winner--as someone who always comes through.
9. Tell myself that I can probably work things out to my advantage.
10. Accept this situation because there is nothing I can do to change it.
11. Think about the challenges I can find in this situation.

Initially a cross-situational measurement of coping was planned and participants were asked to respond to the action and cognitive reappraisal scales separately for role ambiguity and role overload. However, the intercorrelation across situations was .63 for the action scale and .65 for the cognitive reappraisal scale so responses were collapsed into summary scores for each scale.

Symptom-Focused Coping ($\bar{X} = 50$; $S.D. = 8.5$)

1. Get extra sleep or nap.
2. Drink a moderate amount (i.e., 2 drinks) of alcoholic beverage.
3. Take tranquilizers, sedatives or other drugs.
4. Do physical exercise (jogging, example, dancing, or other participative sports).
5. Practice transcendental meditation.
6. Use biofeedback training.
7. Use relaxation training.
8. Seek company of friends.
9. Seek company of family.
10. Eat or snack.
11. Watch TV.
12. Attend sporting, cultural or community events.
13. Take it out on family or friends.
14. Pursue hobbies or leisure time activities not covered above.
15. Go buy something; spend money.
16. Take time off from work.
17. Change physical state in a manner not covered above (hair done, sauna, massage, sexual activity).
18. Take a trip to another city.
19. Daydream.
20. Seek professional help or counseling.
21. Turn to prayer or spiritual thoughts.
22. Complain to others.
23. Smoke cigarettes, cigars or pipe.